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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SOME OF THE CAUSES WHICH HINDER
A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

Whoever has taken the trouble to investigate the early history of New-England, as it respects religion, with a view to settle this question, whether our Fathers had Revivals of Religion? must have become fully convinced that such was the fact. Several of the first generations, born in this land, were nearly all brought into the christian church by a credible profession of personal piety. During the prevalence of lax opinions respecting the qualifications of church membership, and the undisputed reign of the half-way-covenant, these scenes of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, were granted sparingly to the churches, and for considerable time, almost wholly withheld. It pleased God, however, to raise up the immortal Edwards, to reform his churches, in this land and from his day, we may date the commencement of the New-England Reformation.-- From that day to this, Revivals of great power, purity, and genuine-

ness have been enjoyed not only in N. England, but in nearly all parts of the U. States. This then seems to be the great method, adopted by the counsels of infinite wisdom for building up the kingdom of Christ in this country.— Whether it is owing to any thing peculiar in the state of society in this land, or in the theology, or manner of preaching which prevails among us, that seasons of refreshing in this peculiar form, are nearly or wholly confined at present to the U. S. I am not able to determine. Be that as it may, to us nothing is of more importance than facts respecting Revivals of religion. This field however is too wide for the present paper— I shall confine myself to remarks on some of the causes which hinder Revivals—(These causes must be found in the state of society, of men's hearts and views, and in their conduct.) True, we are dependent on God for the influence of the Holy Spirit, without which nothing can be done. But he has most solemnly assured us, that he is more ready to give the Holy

Spirit to those who ask him, than earthly parents are to give bread to their hungry children. We are not straitened in him, but in our own bowels. Every man, who has the bible in his hand, must subscribe to the sentiment, that on God's part "all things are ready." Among the causes then found in our churches and parishes, which hinder a Revival of religion, may be reckoned,

1. A state of contention. It is of little importance what is the subject of contention, if contention exists. It may be respecting worldly business merely, or it may relate to denominative distinctions, or to a meeting-house, or a minister, or politics or any thing else. Wherever the spirit of contention is found, the Spirit of God is not. This is sure, while it lasts, to prevent the commencement of a Revival, and when commenced, if it then arises, to bring it to a speedy termination. It is impossible that it should not have this effect. Contention absorbs public attention, and chains it down to this world. A Revival demands public attention, and elevates it above the world. Contention destroys love: but a Revival without love, is a Revival without religion. Contention destroys a spirit of prayer. Without prayer, there can be no Revival. God will be inquired of for these things to do them for us. God will be known as the God of peace. He forsakes every place, where peace is wanting. When the apostle

said, be at peace among yourselves, be exhorted to that, without which the use of the means of grace will be unavailing.

2. Nearly allied to the above, is a spirit of speculation in matters of religion. I do not mean by this a spirit of honest and candid inquiry respecting the fundamental principles of religion, those which are essential to the formation of the christian character. This spirit of inquiry is a favourable omen; a proof that the deathlike insensibility and indifference, so natural to man on the subject of religion, is beginning to yield to the force of conscience and the light of truth. But when a spirit of eager and zealous disputation arises, respecting points acknowledged on all hands not to be essential to the christian system, this may be called, and this is precisely what I mean, by a spirit of speculation. This spirit is unfriendly to a Revival. Not only does it turn off the minds of men from great practical and experimental subjects of vital importance, but it necessarily lowers the tone of earnest piety, manifested in a deep concern for the welfare of souls, and the prosperity of Zion. Whatever professions may be made of zeal for the glory of God, as the motive of indulging a speculative spirit, if the heart is so absorbed in these speculations as to leave it cold and dead in regard to the salvation of souls, all such professions are to be suspected. Zeal for the glory

of God, when true and genuine, is always associated with a deep concern for the salvation of men. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." Our proper business is to glorify God by seeking the salvation of men. It is truly melancholy, when a minister goes into a strange place to display "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel," to find that numbers, even of professed christians, are listening to him, and waiting every word, with keen-eyed criticism, to ascertain whether he believes or rejects the peculiarities of their own favorite schemes. What hope is there that such men will hear to the salvation of their souls, or will be impelled by what they hear to the more vigorous discharge of every duty? do not such hearers abound in some of our congregations? And are not the hearts of some pious and faithful ministers sunk in discouragement, and broken, to witness the blasting effects of this spirit on all their labors and efforts? What is most to be deplored is, men are found on all sides of all questions, which respect subjects not of vital importance, who do not attach such an undue importance to their philosophical views and tenets, as to suspect, and almost fear a Revival in which those opinions are not fully embraced.

3. This leads me to remark, that another cause of hinderance to a Revival, is a want of faithful-

ness in preaching the essential doctrines of the gospel. Here I would remark, that some allowance should be made for those honest-hearted pious ministers, who are as yet unenlightened respecting some of the vital principles of the gospel. President Edwards remarks, that an imperfect ministry may have *some* good things in it, on account of which God may see fit to crown it with his blessing. Indeed we can hardly suppose that any ministry is wholly without imperfection.-- But what I refer to, is a disposition to keep out of sight, certain truths because they are deemed unprofitable. Can we expect a blessing on a ministry which aims to be wiser than God? The same objection lies against keeping back important truth, because it will give offence. That minister, who is so far governed by the fear of man, as to be more afraid of the loss of salary than of the souls of his people, will in all probability loose both. Nor is it sufficient to exhibit all important truth, just for the sake of saving the conscience from distress, but in so cloaked, and concealed, and muffled a manner that scarcely any body shall understand it, or feel its edge. There is, undoubtedly, such a thing as imprudence in preaching truth, and there is a pride of faithfulness, which makes what should be a humble preacher a theological Goliath, which cannot be too conscientiously avoided. President Edwards ob-

jects to the sentiment, that it is right and best to stir up as much enmity as possible by preaching. I know, said he, there is a very great and deep and amazing enmity in the carnal heart against God, and his word—so deep and strong that it would be dangerous to have it all awakened. But still unless the vital truths of the gospel are so faithfully, and plainly and forcibly inculcated from the pulpit, that people are obliged to see them, and feel that they are demonstrated, little hope can be entertained that they will be subdued by the gospel.—What I contend for is a plain exhibition of vital truth. It is easy for a man to deceive himself, by saying truth must be preached, and include in the word truth such speculations as are beyond the essential principles of religion. Edwards was a model on this subject.

4. Another cause of hinderance to Revivals is an injudicious exhibition of the doctrines of the gospel. There is no doctrine so plain as not to be capable of distortion. Something may, without any bad intention, be added to, or subtracted from, what the bible has taught which will entirely change the complexion, and nature, and influence of the doctrine. Total depravity may be represented, as it is in a famous "Contrast," to "mean the defilement of the *understanding, conscience, and all the natural powers* of the soul." This must imply that total depravity makes men natural fools, and not

the proper objects of moral obligation. On this view of the subject, regeneration must imply the communication of new natural power to the understanding, and new natural faculties to the soul. Man's dependance and impotence may be so viewed as to lead him to feel and say he has nothing to do—the only course left for him is to lie perfectly still in his grave till a voice from heaven commands his moral resurrection. If he is to be saved, he shall be, and if he is to be lost, he shall be. If he is ever saved, it will be without an anxious thought on his part—and if go to hell he must, he will not be tormented before-hand with one pang of fear. I might adduce many more examples of the baneful influence of injudicious representations of christian doctrine—but must forbear. It is very much in consequence of such representations, that such multitudes at the present day are sunk into a total stupidity. The chills of the second death are already upon them. I would that this single declaration of the great Dr. Hopkins might be felt by every soul in this land—"Sinners are under no inability, which does not consist in opposition of heart to the will of God." This subject, an injudicious exhibition of doctrines, is worthy the particular attention of pious laymen. Not but that there are private members of some of our churches who are as well instructed as most clergymen—and are as capable of explaining and

defending any important doctrine. But *all* pious laymen are not thus enlightened. They are not to conclude from this, that they are incapable of usefulness. There is a sphere in which they may act with great efficiency and success. This, however, is not, ordinarily, in propounding deep and difficult points of doctrine, and endeavouring to solve and remove objections. They may do much to convince their families and friends of the reality and importance of religion, and when their attention is so far awakened that they become inquirers and objectors, can bring them under the personal instructions of a minister.

5. Spiritual pride among christians is another cause of hinderance to Revivals. This evil, most hateful and disgusting in itself, has a direct influence to prevent the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.—God may see so much of this in the heart of a minister, as to render it certain in his own mind, that if he were to grant the least success to his ministry, he would be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil. He may see so much of this in a church, as to render it certain, that if he were to hear and answer their prayers, they would take the glory to themselves, and become boastful, dogmatical, and despisers of others. This is a great and powerful engine of satan, with which he destroys a multitude of souls.

Finally, for the unlooked for

length of this communication admonishes me to stop. A hard and driving manner of address is an evil which has its weight, and may deserve a moment's consideration. The perfect model of all good and faithful preaching, wept over the wickedest city that ever stood on earth; and the most successful apostle, said of some to whom he wrote, even weeping—they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. There was no sin in Moses' saying, "hear now ye rebels," except what lay in the temper and manner with which he said it. Are not too many good men of the present day more like Moses in this respect, than they should be?

An impenitent sinner may be *braced* against instruction and warning by a look, or a tone of voice, or a hard sentence, as well as any thing else; and when this is done, further efforts are commonly without any avail. It is worthy of serious inquiry, whether there are unaffected tears enough mingled with the prayers and sermons of ministers, the exhortations, intreaties and warnings of christians?

I shall now ask the privilege to make a short address to my fellow christians.

Dear Brethren—Are any or all the causes above mentioned, which hinder a Revival of religion existing and producing an influence among you. Pause and review, I intreat you, these causes, and answer the question now proposed, as in the presence of God. Is

there any contention among you? If so, are you not straitened in your own bowels? Do you not know what is the reason you have not a Revival of religion? And what possible use or enjoyment is there in the heart-burnings, and hard feelings which prevail among you? When you think of a contention as the guilty cause of destroying one soul, do you not feel that the whole world is not worth one serious quarrel? And is there nothing you can do to promote peace? Is there no point of interest, or right, or will, you can relinquish for this object? are you afraid of the triumphing of the wicked, if you should do this? Oh, would it not be better to bear all the taunts, and scoffs, and ridicule, and contempt, which wicked men can heap upon you, than be the means of prolonging for a single day a contention which you might settle? Can you not forgive? Have you complied with the command of him who said, when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any.

Further, Is there a spirit of speculation among you? Are you not convinced that when this spirit prevails, the pride of the heart is gratified by the keenness of the intellect? How is it when ye come together? Has every one a psalm, a hymn with which his soul has been enlightened and

comforted? Has every one an exhortation, stirring up the brethren to love and good works? Are your affections lively, and animated, and such as they should be? Is it possible, that the reason you are not blessed with a Revival is to be found in you?

Brethren, are you suffering your minister to preach plainly and fully the great truths of the gospel "without fear?" Are you assuring him, that whatever contempt he may incur by this course, or whatever he may suffer in any other way, you will be his friends and supporters? When he preaches the truth, are you putting it out of the the power of the world to say to him some of your church do not believe as you preach?—And when he declares the judgments of heaven against the vices of the world, are you forbidding the world to say, some of the church are as guilty as we are? If you cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, have you not reason to be startled at the question, whether the cause of there being no Revival in the place where you reside, is not found in you? Have your souls been melted with tenderness towards men, whose awful character is, that they are enemies of God—and whose end is destruction, unless they repent? Have you spoken the truth to them in love? and left them, if not with a conviction that their hearts are totally opposed to God, yet at least, that yours are full of benev-

* If some of the contributors to the *Christian Magazine* would give a thorough and scriptural view of the duty of forgiving injuries, it would gratify

A CONSTANT READER.

olence and kindness and compassion? Brethren look well to it.—Is the reason why there is no Revivals in the place of your residence to be found in you?

A Friend to Revivals.

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SERMON—No. X.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF WORLDLY ANXIETY.

MATTHEW VI. 31.—*Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

These words are found in that discourse of the Savior, which is commonly called his sermon on the mount. This is the longest of his public discourses, as they are recorded by the evangelists. It embraces a variety of important subjects, which apply to the character and conduct of men in all ages and nations. Yet he appears to have had, throughout this discourse, a special regard to the instruction and comfort of his true friends. For he begins the discourse by a description of their peculiar character and blessedness. Then he proceeds to illustrate and enforce their peculiar duties. He next explains the great doctrines and duties of religion, as they are contained in the divine law. And then he shows with what spirit and in what manner, his friends should perform their devotions. But after he had given the instructions, which have been mentioned, he

employs a large portion of the discourse upon the subject, that is suggested in the words of our text. In this part of his discourse he offers a number of familiar and powerful considerations, against an anxious concern for temporal blessings. In view of these considerations, he urges upon his hearers, and in a special manner, upon his true friends, the words of our text. He says “Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” From the meaning of the original and from the very nature of the subject we are prevented from supposing, that the Savior intended that no manner of thought or concern, was to be taken respecting the things he here mentioned. He meant to forbid those, whom he addressed, to be anxious and troubled about temporal blessings. The reasons, by which, in the context, he enforced the words of our text, appear to be, in some degree, peculiar to real christians. Hence we are lead, in the present discourse to consider this general observation—Christians ought not to be anxious respecting temporal blessings.

To illustrate this observation, it is proposed,

I. To show why christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings; and,

II. To show why they should not be anxious about such blessings. It is proposed,

I. To show why christians are

liable to be anxious about temporal blessings.

If they were not liable to be anxious about such blessings, the Savior would not have used so many arguments, as he urges in our context, against such a spirit of anxiety. But it appears probable, from experience and observation, as well as from the Savior's instructions, that there is no evil, in which real christians, generally, are more liable to indulge themselves than an anxious concern about temporal blessings. And there are several considerations, by which they are induced to fall into this evil.

1. They are liable to become anxious about such blessings from seeing the temporal prosperity of worldly people. Christians are placed among the people of the world, who have their portion in this life. Though worldly people are not always prosperous in their pursuits, yet they are more commonly indulged in earthly riches, honors and pleasures than the people of God. While the people of God are witnesses of their designs, exertions, possessions and enjoyments, they are greatly tempted to imbibe their spirit and to become anxious for those temporal blessings, which they see so generally and bountifully bestowed upon the ungodly. The psalmist penitently confesses, that he was envious and anxious, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked.—Against this occasion of worldly anxiety God cautions his people.

He says—"Fret not thyself because of evil doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Fret not thyself because of him, who prospereth in his way, because of the man, who bringeth wicked devices to pass." The people of the world allow themselves to form and practice such devices to acquire temporal blessings, as pious persons are unwilling to adopt. In view of the worldly designs, exertions and prosperity of sinners, they are very liable to be troubled and anxious respecting their own temporal concerns.

2. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings from their constant need of these blessings. Though they are apt to desire a greater portion of temporal blessings, than they really need, or would use in a proper manner, yet they do need many favors to supply their constant and numerous necessities. And when they consider how much they do need and shall need, as long as they live, they are apt to be troubled and to be anxious, saying—"What shall we eat and what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?"—They sometimes find themselves needy and destitute of such blessings, as are necessary for the comfort and support of their lives. And in such a state of constant want, they cannot be ignorant nor insensible of their situation. And they are very apt to be careful and troubled about the many

things they need ; and to be thoughtful and anxious about the supply of their constant and numerous necessities.

3. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, because, very often, they can see no way to obtain the favors they need. Sometimes their former sources fail ; and they know not what way to turn, nor where to look for the supply of their necessities. Sometimes their necessities are greatly increased, without any increase of their resources. Many pious persons have been reduced to the most straitened and needy circumstances ; and yet they have been unable to see from one day to another how they could obtain their daily bread. In such straits they are very liable to be anxious and to think they have good reasons to be troubled respecting their temporal affairs. But if they are subjected to no present suffering, in respect to temporal blessings, they are apt to indulge an enquiring and anxious spirit respecting futurity, when they can see no way to supply their future and expected necessities. Their anxiety is apt to arise and increase, as favorable appearances and prospects lessen or cease. Again,

4. Christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, as they are disposed, through unbelief to be distrustful of divine providence. When their hearts are fixed, trusting in God, they leave all their concerns in his hands.—

And they can then say—"The Lord is our shepherd ; we shall not want." But if their faith subsides and their hearts turn from God, they become troubled and anxious about every object, by which they are affected. And as they are very liable to decline from God in their hearts, they are in danger of falling into a distrustful spirit. Then they are anxious respecting temporal blessings.—This spirit of unbelief and distrust is the real foundation of all sinful anxiety in christians. And so long as they are liable to distrust divine providence, they will be equally liable to be anxious about temporal blessings.

It is now proposed,

II. To show why christians should not be anxious about temporal blessings. The Savior uses a number of arguments, in our context, to persuade his people against the indulgence of an anxious spirit. And we need look no farther, than what he says on this subject, for reasons that should induce christians not to be anxious about temporal blessings. As one reason against their being anxious, he intimates,

1. That by being anxious they would be like those, who are wholly destitute of religion. Having spoken the words of our text, he adds, "For after all these things do the gentiles seek." The nations, whom he calls the gentiles, were then in heathenish darkness and wickedness. They were without the knowledge and

favor of the true God. Their chief concern and pursuit extended no farther than to temporal blessings. For the children of God to resemble persons of such a character, would be very displeasing to their Father in heaven, and very injurious to themselves. And it is at present an important reason against worldly anxiety in christians, that the people of the world are anxious about the objects of time and sense. To be conformed to the world in this respect, is inconsistent with their character, profession and privileges. If christians would show, that they differ from worldly people, they must not be anxious about worldly things. But if like the world, they are anxious about these things, they dishonor their heavenly Father and act unworthy of their holy profession. It may be observed,

2. As another reason against worldly anxiety in christians, the Savior declares that their heavenly Father knows that they need temporal blessings. He says—“Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” By his knowing what they need, is meant that he considers and regards their necessities. He constantly sees what they need; and he feels a lively and tender interest in their circumstances. While God is so concerned for his people, they ought not to be troubled and anxious about temporal blessings, but should cast all their cares on him. When

christians consider the character of God, and their relation to him, they are contented and satisfied in believing that he considers what they need, and is properly affected by their necessities.

3. As another reason against worldly anxiety, the Savior directs his disciples to consider the providence of God towards inferior creatures. From what God does in feeding the fowls of the air, and in clothing the grass of the field, he shows they have no reason to be distrustful respecting his providing for their temporal necessities. He says, “Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.—Are ye not much better than they?” Again he says, “Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lillies of the field; how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is; and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” After giving such instruction, well might the Savior say, “Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?”

4. As another reason against worldly anxiety, the Savior intimates, that it can produce no

good effect. He says, "Which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?" To these words, according to Luke, the Savior adds this question—"If ye then be not able to do that thing, which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Worldly anxiety never removes nor lessens a person's necessities; but it prevents him from enjoying what he has, and unfits him for receiving what he needs. An anxious spirit about worldly concerns and temporal enjoyments, is perfectly unreasonable, as it is totally ineffectual.

5. An anxious spirit about temporal blessings withdraws the attention and the affections from spiritual objects. This consideration the Savior offers, in our context, as another reason against worldly anxiety. He says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt; and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The cares of this life, the Savior mentions, in explaining the parable of the sower, as one of the causes, that choke the word, and render the hearers of the gospel unfruitful. While persons are anxious about temporal concerns, they bring leanness into their souls. But spiritual interests and enjoyments

are more excellent and important than temporal. For this reason christians should set their hearts upon heavenly objects and not be anxious about earthly things.—Again,

6. Anxiety about temporal blessings is inconsistent with the service, which christians owe to God. They are required and are bound to devote themselves to his service, and give him the first and highest place in their affections and exertions. But they always turn their hearts from God, when they become anxious about themselves and the temporal blessings they need. This consideration the Savior also urges against an anxious spirit. He says—"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." He then adds, "Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." An anxious and selfish spirit hinders worldly people from becoming religious. It also prevents christians, so far as it prevails, from being faithful and joyful in the service of God.—Christians cannot serve God, while they allow themselves to be anxious concerning their own temporal necessities. Besides,

7. Christians should not be anxious about temporal blessings, because the kingdom of God should

engage their first and highest attention. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," is the requirement of the Savior, in connection with the prohibition, that is given in our text. The enlargement and prosperity of the kingdom of God on earth, call for the constant attention and vigorous exertions of his people. To turn from this great and noble object to their temporal necessities is very unwise and sinful. Their very prayers forbid an anxious spirit about temporal objects. For they are taught to pray, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." According to these petitions should always be the feelings of their hearts and the actions of their lives. But such petitions are inconsistent with such a spirit, as leads a person to indulge anxious thoughts about his own temporal necessities. Let christians feel and act, as they ought in respect to the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom; and they will not be careful and troubled about the vain and transient objects of this world. Once more,

3. God promises to christians, who are faithful and obedient to him, all the temporal blessings they may need. In our context, the Savior says—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." And God

makes many promises of the temporal blessings, which they may need, to his people in various parts of the holy scriptures. They ought to take his word, as the foundation of their confidence and to cast all their cares upon him. But as a distrustful and anxious spirit rejects and opposes the kind and gracious promises of God, it is highly sinful and offensive. The character, the conduct and the word of God, forbid and condemn an anxious spirit respecting temporal blessings.—It is, then, for the wisest and best reasons, that the Savior says in our text—"Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat; or what shall we drink; or wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If christians have no reason to be anxious about temporal blessings, then with a right spirit they will be very happy respecting these blessings. With such a spirit, they will be content with such things as they have; and will trust in God for what they may need. Being relieved and contented in respect to the things of this life, they will be prepared to perform the duties and enjoy the blessings of the gospel. And they will find that "godliness with contentment is great gain." With a right spirit a christian can say with the psalmist. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." If christians will only keep them-

selves from anxious thoughts and worldly cares, they may enjoy that godliness, which "is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

2. Christians may learn their spiritual condition by attending to their conduct respecting temporal blessings. They may determine whether they are advancing, or declining in religion. If they are advancing in religion, they are not careful and troubled about earthly things. They then find better objects than this world can afford, to employ their attention and affections. But as they become anxious about earthly things they turn from God and decline in respect to the duties and enjoyments of religion. If then christians would understand their spiritual condition, they should enquire and consider how they are affected in respect to the interests and concerns of this life.

3. From what has been said, we may conclude, that there are good reasons why God places many of his people in needy circumstances respecting temporal blessings. Many christians are very needy and destitute in respect to the things of this life. Such a state serves to try their hearts.—Such trials are suited to show christians to themselves and afford an high degree of comfort and joy in the evidence of their love and friendship to God. Constant poverty leads christians to trust in divine providence for temporal

blessings. Such trust in God is far more safe and happy, than confidence in abundance of worldly possessions and enjoyments. Poverty promotes in christians their enjoyment of God in temporal blessings. They more highly enjoy God in what they receive, than what they would do, if they were not made sensible, by their poverty, of his providential care and kindness, and of their dependence upon him for the supply of their wants. The poverty of christians affords an opportunity for God to show his character, and express his love and kindness in providing and bestowing the blessings they need. Needy christians see more of God in the little they receive, than the rich can see in the abundance they possess. The poverty of many christians affords other christians an opportunity to follow the example of their heavenly Father in supplying the wants of their needy brethren. There are, then, wise and good reasons, why many christians should be placed in needy circumstances respecting temporal blessings.

4. If christians are liable to be anxious about temporal blessings, then a contented spirit respecting these blessings, is an eminent attainment in religion. Many persons doubtless suppose, they are contented, because they have never been severely tried; but have commonly been placed in easy and pleasant circumstances. Some persons may be easy in their feelings about temporal blessings from a

member the Lord thy God."— They, who enjoy temporal prosperity, are very apt to forget God and to disregard his glory in using the blessings they have received from his hand. But they ought to be sensible of their entire dependence upon God for all their possessions and enjoyments. And they should be careful to use their temporal blessings with a frugal, thankful and obedient spirit.

IN WHAT SENSE DOES GOD DESIRE THE
SALVATION OF ALL MEN ?

This question takes it for granted, that God *does* desire the salvation of all men. A truth so plain as this, and so readily admitted by almost every reflecting mind, scarcely needs a formal proof.— The fact that God is *benevolent*, that he has given his Son to die as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that he freely *offers* salvation to all upon condition of their repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that he has given his Holy Spirit to strive with those who reject, as well as with those who embrace the gospel, that he has invited, entreated, and besought sinners of every description to accept of his offered mercy and live, is certainly enough to convince every candid person, that God desires the salvation of all men. But the question before us is, "In what *sense* does he desire this ? To give a plain and satisfactory answer to

the question here stated, is the object of this paper. And,

1. We are not to understand from the fact that God, desires the salvation of all men, that he is *determined* to save them all. Many have supposed, from the desires which God has manifested on this subject, that he has determined to save all ; and of consequence all will be saved. But *we*, in thousands of instances, do not determine to accomplish things, which on some accounts, would be desirable ; and in thousands of other instances, we determine upon things, which on some accounts are undesirable. And for ought that appears, higher orders of beings may often find it necessary to do the same. It cannot therefore be inferred, from the *desires* of the Supreme Being that all mankind should be converted and saved, that he has determined to save them all ; and especially is such an inference inadmissible, since he has clearly revealed in the scriptures determinations of a different kind. He has there assured us in the plainest terms, that *all mankind are not to be saved*. The wicked will, at death, be "driven away in their wickedness"—they will come forth, in the last day "to the resurrection of damnation"—at the final judgment, they will "go away into everlasting punishment," where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up, forever and ever"—But if

careless, and thoughtless, and lost in respect to this life, by neglecting slothful temper. But a spirit of lecting religion. By becoming christian contentment, which arises from confidence and obedience towards God, never exists in any person, who is not truly pious, and who has not made a pleasing progress in the divine life. The apostle thought it worthy to be mentioned, as an important attainment, that he had learnt to be content. He says, "For I have learnt, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Such a spirit of contentment, as the apostle here describes, never exists in any christians, who have not long been in the school of Christ, and been teachable and obedient scholars.

5. If christians have no reason to be anxious about temporal blessings, then they, who are not christians, have no reason to neglect religion on account of their temporal concerns. They do constantly neglect religion. And they commonly and chiefly neglect it on account of their anxiety and engagedness in respect to their temporal interests and pursuits. These concerns they suppose afford urgent and sufficient reasons for disregarding their Creator and the interests of their own souls. But nothing is gained, but much is

lost in respect to this life, by neglecting religion. By becoming truly religious, a person's condition in respect to temporal blessings is much better, than it can be, while irreligious. They, therefore, who are not religious, have not the least reason for neglecting religion on account of their temporal concerns.

6. Since God is so concerned to supply christians with temporal blessings, they should be careful to use those blessings to his glory. They should see and confess his kind and gracious providence in their temporal enjoyments. The instructions, which God gave to his ancient people respecting their temporal possessions and enjoyments, ought now to be seriously considered and regarded by every person. He said by Moses, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware, that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my own hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt re-

forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my own hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt re-

—unspeakably great ; and the only consideration, by which the benevolent heart can be reconciled to it, is, that it is an evil without which, the highest glory of God, and the great good, could not be promoted. But by the sentiment now under consideration, this only method of becoming relieved of the difficulty is taken away. The highest glory of God, and the greatest good, can be promoted, it appears, in the salvation of all men, equally as well as they are at present. Why then, I ask again, are not all saved ? Why has infinite benevolence adopted a plan, involving the eternal ruin of millions of creatures, if he might have glorified himself, and promoted every desirable purpose of his government, equally as well, in some other way.

Again, The idea that God desires, on the whole, the salvation of all men, is inconsistent with various and numerous representations of scripture. It is inconsistent with those passages which represent him as appointing a certain portion of our race, to be “the vessels of his wrath.” “Who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.” “There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” And the Supreme Being is represented in the scriptures, not only as appointing a

certain portion of men to sin and death ; but as blinding their minds, hardening their hearts, and preparing them for their final doom.—

“Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor.” “Whom he will, he hardeneth.” “The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and healed.”—

“For this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth.” And God is further represented in the scriptures not only as appointing a certain portion of our race to eternal death, and as blinding, hardening, and fitting them for it ; but as so ordering events in providence as, in his own time, to cut them off, and complete their ruin. “It was of the Lord, to harden the hearts” of the Canaanites “to come against Israel, that he might destroy them utterly.” The sons of Eli, “hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would stay them.” “And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up, and fall, at Ramoth Gilead.” Whatever may be thought of these various passages, they certainly are in the bible ; and whatever inter-

such is to be the end of a certain portion of our race, then God has not determined to save them all; although, as we have seen, the salvation of all must be to him in some sense desirable.

2. When it is said that God desires the salvation of all men, we are not to understand that he desires this, *on the whole*. Many who have no faith in the doctrine that God has *determined* to save all men, still regard him as desiring—not only in itself considered, but *on the whole*—that all should be saved. “He desires the salvation of all,” it is said, “*if they will repent*”; although for wise reasons, he declines exerting his sovereign power in bringing them to repentance.” This is the same as to say, that he desires, on the whole, that all should repent and be saved. To this view of the subject, which is at present a popular and prevalent one, there are to me insuperable objections; some of which I shall proceed to state. And first,

It goes to shew, that the general plan of government, which God is at present pursuing, is not the best which might be pursued. It holds forth another plan, which, to say the least, is equally as good, and with which the Deity could be equally well pleased. This is, that all should come to repentance, and be saved. This, would his rebellious creatures only consent to it, he desires, *on the whole*; and it is only because they will not consent, that **he** has recourse

to the plan which is actually going into effect. Obviously, therefore, the view I am opposing, represents the present plan of divine administration, not as the best which could have been devised, or as that which God on the whole preferred; but as a kind of last resort, to which he had recourse, because he could accomplish his object in no other way. However this mode of representing the subject may seem to others; to me, I must acknowledge, it appears absurd, and is painful in the extreme.

In the second place, If God desires, on the whole, that all should repent and be saved; then it is impossible to assign any satisfactory reason, why he does not exert his power, and bring all to repentance. It will not be pretended, by those who adopt the sentiment I here oppose, that God cannot convert sinners, without destroying their freedom; for they admit that he does convert all who are saved, in perfect consistency with their freedom. If then he desires, on the whole, that all men should be saved; if he can promote his own brightest glory and the greatest good, in saving all, as well as in any other way, and if he can bring them to repentance, in perfect consistency with their freedom; why, I ask, are any lost? Why does he not accomplish his desires, and glorify himself, in saving all? The everlasting sin and misery of millions of our race, is certainly, in itself, a great evil

verse, so far from thwarting or defeating this plan, are themselves a fulfilment of its essential parts.— On this infinite and glorious plan of government, in which all things are tending in the happiest manner towards the greatest general good, the heart of Deity has been uniformly set; and in accomplishing it, he is moulding the hearts, and directing all the changes and concerns of creatures, according to his pleasure. In perfect consistency with their freedom, and with all due regard to considerations of character and of justice, he is forming his vessels of mercy, and his vessels of wrath—he is melting and hardening, saving and destroying, as seemeth good in his sight. He is “working all things, according to the counsel of his own will.”

And while the view we have given, thus leaves the great plan of Deity unchanged and glorious, it also leaves him at liberty to indulge and to express all the feelings of his benevolence, in respect to existing characters and events. He may feel the yearnings of a father towards his incorrigible and ruined enemies. He may say in respect to them, “How shall I give you up?” He may affirm in the most solemn manner that he has no pleasure in their death.— He may invite and entreat them to turn and live. He may desire, in itself considered, and desire earnestly, that all should be saved. It is thus, that the view here given harmonizes all the various rep-

resentations of scripture on the subject; and consequently it is entitled to be received as a part of that truth which has been revealed to us from heaven.

To the sentiment advanced in this paper, I know of but one objection which needs at present to be answered. It has been said, “If God desires the salvation of all, in itself considered merely, and not on the whole; then there can be no sincerity in the universal invitations of the gospel.”

In answer to this objection it may be sufficient to say, that the universal invitations of the gospel were designed to *express* the good will which God bears to all men, and the desire which he feels for their salvation in itself considered. If it is a fact, that he feels a very strong and ardent desire for the salvation of all men in itself considered, at the same time, that he, from a regard to the greater good which will accrue to the universe from the punishment of some, determines that all shall not be saved, it is highly proper and important that he should express it. It is as important that this feeling of his should be expressed, as it is that his true character should be known; for, this concealed, his true character could not be known. But there is no conceivable way in which God's benevolence to all men, his desire that they may be saved, and his unwillingness that any should perish, could be expressed, when some are actually lost, but by his providing a Savior

pretation may be put upon them, Thus, the afflictions of the present they will remain, I think, in glaring inconsistency with the sentiment that God desires, on the whole, the salvation of all men, not afflict willingly, nor grieve and that he can glorify himself, the children of men." Still, he and promote the greatest good, as sees it best on the whole that as well in saving all, as in any other way. I now observe,

3. When God is represented as desiring the salvation of all men, we are to understand that he desires this, in itself considered.—There is scarcely any event which does not present a different aspect to us, when viewed as it is in itself, and when viewed in relation to other things. Thus, many things, which are in themselves desirable to us, when viewed in relation to other things, appear undesirable ; and many others, which are in themselves undesirable, when viewed in their connections, appear desirable and important. The amputation of a mortally diseased limb—the taking of a loathed, dreaded medicine—and indeed, the doing of any thing, which causes us pain, whether in body or mind, must be in itself undesirable to us ; still, how many such things appear desirable to us on the whole—are wisely determined on by us—and cheerfully accomplished. The distinction here referred to, so very obvious in human affairs, may safely be carried up to the Supreme Being. Most objects must appear to him very differently when viewed by themselves, and when viewed in relation to the infinite whole.—

ever was, or will be, in the uni-

It is highly favorable to the view

here given, that it represents the present plan of divine administration as decidedly the best one—as that which God in eternity preferred, and to the accomplishment of which, from the first he has uniformly adhered. He adopted it—not because man fell, and he wished to supply a remedy—nor because, when salvation was offered, all would not accede to the terms—nor because he foresaw, in eternity, that such would be the fact ;—but because he originally and eternally preferred it—because he saw from the beginning that it was decidedly the best.—And the fall of angels and men ; the promulgation of gospel offers, and their final rejection by a portion of our race ; and indeed all the sin, and all the misery, which ever was, or will be, in the uni-

room, where she might rest from her fatigue till we were summoned to resume our journey. The sun had advanced considerably in his course; the morning was delightful; and the whole scenery calculated to enliven and animate the feelings. I endeavoured to cheer the mind of my feeble fellow-traveller, by directing it to the interesting objects which were presented to our view. But it was in vain. She seemed uninterested, alike in the beauties of nature, and of art, and in every subject I could propose, and disposed to be silent, as far as with propriety she might. Yet her's was not the silence of a vacant mind. There was an expression of intelligence in her countenance which had survived the wastings of disease, and which gave an interest to her appearance when the glow of health had departed. Her mind was evidently upon some yet untouched subject—There was a deep thoughtfulness in her countenance, which convinced me that the memory of some severe affliction possessed her soul, and at the same time a serenity which said, that her's were not feelings of unmingled sorrow. I felt a desire to know the history of the mourning stranger, but the subject was too delicate for direct enquiry and I suppressed my curiosity. As we approached the termination of her ride, I asked her if she was going to her parents. "I have no parents" she replied, "I am an orphan." I soon per-

ceived that I had touched upon the subject which occupied all her thoughts, and that on this she conversed freely. From the little sketch which she voluntarily gave me of her situation, I learned that a few months previous, her father, her mother, her brother and sister; the only members of the family older than herself, had within five weeks of each other been all laid in the grave.

Her surviving sister, younger than she, had been taken into the family of the minister of the parish, to whose little flock the deceased belonged. She had resided mostly in the city, which we left in the morning, and was now returning to her guardian and friends, on account of her failing health. The stage here turned from the main road, to accommodate one of the passengers, and brought us close along by the village church-yard. The emotions of her mind were visible in her countenance, and a tear involuntarily rose in her eye, as this resting place for our mortality met her view. "There," said she, pointing to a distant part of the grave yard, where four dark marbles stood close together, "are my parents, my brother, and my sister."

The emotions produced by the first prospect of these habitations of the dead, passed away with the moment, for it was attended by no new feeling. Her mind was accustomed to dwell on these subjects, and its usual serenity was

for all, his making offers of pardon to all, and his inviting, entertaining and commanding all to accept them. These provisions and invitations of the gospel as clearly and forcibly express his tender and benevolent regard to every individual of the human race, as his purposes do his regard to the general good.

Whether it was that the first dawn of the morning was more a novelty to me than to my companions or whether they had enjoyed less of the repose of night, than myself, I cannot decide. But the fact is, most of them soon fell into a sleep as profound as the roughness of the road would permit, while an interesting train of thought preserved my own mind wakeful and active.

THE ORPHAN.

Returning a few weeks since, from a tour west of the Hudson, I took my seat at one of the principal towns in Connecticut, in the stage for Boston. It was a fine October morning. The twinkling stars were yet visible in the firmament, though shorn of their lustre by the advances of the grey twilight which was gradually extinguishing these wakeful luminaries of the night. The busy hum of the city was still, and the rattling of the stage-coach through the streets, was succeeded by a silence, as deep as it had broken, except where was heard the barking of the dog, whose slumbers have been disturbed by our passing, or the shrill voice of the cock, as he announced approaching day.

Among the companions of my journey, who were summoned thus early to their seats, was a young female, clad in habiliments of deep mourning. She was conducted to the stage by two of her friends, who expressed much anxiety, about

Thus, said I, (as I saw the shades

of night gradually giving place to the rays of the morning) thus will come the brightness of that day, when moral darkness shall be chased from our earth, and the sun of righteousness arise in his glory.— Thus, perhaps, the enraptured spirit, as it emerges from the dark valley of the shadow of death, will perceive the gradual unfolding of those splendours, the full view of which would overpower its yet feeble vision.

Meanwhile the sun ascended the horizon and afforded me an opportunity of viewing more distinctly my companions in the stage. My attention was turned particularly to the one I have mentioned.— The rose of health had faded from her cheek and the hectic flush, which sometimes arose in its stead, afforded no relief to the apprehensions with which, her pale countenance, and feeble frame were contemplated.

On arriving at our breakfast house, she was conducted to a

their feelings in rebellious murmurings against the hand that chastened them, or repressed them in the sullen gloom of melancholy. Others I had seen, who appeared, whilst under the influence of some sore bereavement, to have their hearts softened a little, whose serious feeling all vanished with the affliction which produced it, and left them farther from God, than they were before. Others, like the subject of this little sketch, seem to view the finger of a gracious God in the sorrows of their lives, and are induced, by feeling his afflicting hand, to return to him from whom they have revolted. But the number of these is small. To you who have felt the bereaving strokes of providence, I appeal for the truth of this remark. Have you, when some temporal object of your affections has been torn from your embrace, fixed your affections upon eternal things? When deprived of some *created* blessing, have you looked more humbly and earnestly to the *Creator*, for support and consolation? Has no repining spirit corroded your feelings, and prevented the good which you might have derived from these events? My attention has, for years, been directed to the effect of the providence of God upon the moral character of his creatures. Yet I have found but *few* who appeared to feel so deeply, so sincerely, the words of the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," as did this pious orphan. Christ.

ian reader; had you witnessed the mild, submissive manner, in which she sustained her complicated afflictions, you would have felt with me, that it was better to be a companion of those who mourn, than of those who rejoice; and, would perhaps have felt with me, that you had found in this afflicted, yet unrepining orphan, an example of christian submission and fortitude, worthy of your own imitation. XANTHUS.

Messrs. Editors,

As your Magazine is designed to communicate religious truth, at least, your views of it, I wish that you, or your correspondents, would throw some light on the subject of the claims and assertions advanced by one denomination of christians which serve to perplex, and, and I fear, to mislead the minds of many. In order to bring definitely, before you what I have in view, I will propose several questions:

1. Is salvation sure to all those who are members of the Episcopal church, and receive the sacrament from the hands of her clergy?

2. Must all those, where the gospel is preached, who are not of that church and do not receive the sacrament from the hands of what is called a regular and valid clergy, perish?

3. Is Episcopalian ordination the only regular and valid ordina-

soon restored. When her parents were buried she was herself dangerously sick, and without any hope that she should be happy after death. Her afflictions had been the means, in the hand of God, of weaning her affections from this world, and fixing them on things above. She thought and spoke of following her departed relatives to the world of spirits, with the utmost composure of feeling. She contemplated her waning health without anxiety, for she hoped, though her son of life was prematurely setting, that when its last ray was extinguished, the light of her Redeemer's countenance would be lifted upon her. When she spoke of her obligations of gratitude to *him* who had preserved her during her former sickness, when so many of her companions were called suddenly to give up their account* and had now given her a hope through his grace, that when the mantle of the grave was drawn around her, she should rest with her pious mother and sister in the world of peace; her feelings were too strong for utterance. She attempted to express them, but her heart was too full for words. The tear of gratitude rose in her eyes. She was silent.— In a few moments we entered the village where her guardian resided. As we passed along the street,

* An epidemic prevailed in the village where she resided, which swept off in a few weeks, between 30 and 40 of the inhabitants.

where but a few months since the destroying angel had taken his desolating course, she pointed out the spot where her early youth was spent, the late dwelling of her parents—now no longer her home.

The stage was now at the door. A venerable looking matron, and two younger females, of interesting appearance, came to receive her. The solicitude which they manifested for her health, and the unfeigned pleasure which they expressed, more by actions than words, at seeing her again with them, convinced me, that though an orphan, she was not a friendless one. The storm of adversity had indeed beaten violently upon her; it had swept away the protectors, and the companions of her youth; and was apparently fast sweeping away the frail foundation, on which her mortal life was resting. Yet, when I saw how meekly she bowed before the blast which had withered her earthly enjoyments, and clouded all those flattering prospects, which rise in bright and joyous succession in the youthful mind, I could not but exclaim, “God tempests the wind to the shorn lamb.”

As I pursued my journey, meditating upon the incidents of the morning, I was struck with the different effect, produced by similar events, upon different minds. I had seen afflictions, numerous and deep as those visited upon this unrepining orphan, where the subjects of them gave vent to

was to a great extent the fact, though not without some painful exceptions, which it falls to our lot to record. There were servants who evidently pursued interests separate from their master's, and to his injury. The hedge about their master's vineyard was broken down, and the boar from the wilderness without molestation rooted up the vine. The door of the sheepfold too was left open, and the grievous wolf came in not sparing the flock. When such events happened however, it was common for the servants to become indignant at the boar and the wolf, not reflecting that had the fence of the vineyard, and the door of the sheepfold been kept, the vines and the lambs had escaped injury. It must be added, that the ground also was often so imperfectly tilled as to yield but a scanty harvest, and sometimes from year to year, no harvest at all. But in this case it was common for the servants to console themselves with the reflection, that God only could give the increase, and that as he gives or withholds according to his sovereign good pleasure, no blame could justly attach to them.— There were indeed a few instances of failure, where all the means of securing a crop had apparently been faithfully applied. But it often happened that those who in this manner went forth, from year to year, weeping, bearing precious seed, came again at length rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with

them; and where this was not the case, it frequently happened that the seed though buried long in dust, sprang up in a joyful harvest after the hand that sowed it, and the eye that wept over it, were at rest in the grave.

It was left in charge by the nobleman to his servants, that they should keep in good repair those parts of the farm which had been reduced to cultivation, and urge on the work of subduing the wilderness, until the entire farm should become one fruitful field; and so vigorous at first was the onset upon the wilderness, that it seemed as if every tree of the forest would bow, and every acre of the farm be made to feel the plough, and to wave with harvests. But so much at length did the love of these servants wax cold, and their enterprise abate, that the wilderness regained much of its lost dominion, and all hope and all duty seemed to be limited to the defence of the fruitful fields, against the encroachments of the wilderness.

When at length a small number of servants, moved by primitive affection and zeal, read their master's direction, 'go ye out into all parts of the farm and subdue the wilderness,' and began to make experiments, they were stared upon as madmen. Do you believe, said one, that our master expected, or intended that we should subdue the entire farm? Never. His language is hyperbolic.— Another contended that the fruit

tion ; and are the ordination and his ministrations are invalid and ministrations of the Presbyterian and Congregational clergy irregular and invalid, and not of the christian priesthood ?

4. Is the Episcopal church the only one in covenant with God, and are all other churches without hope and without God in the world, and aliens from the christian commonwealth, and out of the covenant of promise ? Have they no communion with Christ ?

I wish these, or such like questions, were satisfactorily answered. You may be surprised that I ask them ; but the claims and assertions which I have mentioned, and the effect they have on the minds of many well meaning people, must be my apology. If my minister is not ordained, and if all

his ministrations are invalid and nothing ; and if the church to which I belong, is no church of Christ, but a schismatic body, it is important that I and all concerned, should know it. An essential service may be done to the christian community by proper answers to the questions I have proposed. In the light of truth, I, and others may see light.

Yours, &c.

A member of a Congregationalist Church.

QUESTION.

How can it be accounted for that many persons seem to desire religion, who exhibit no evidence of possessing it ?

EXTRACTS.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR.

AN ALLEGORY.

It is recorded in a very ancient book, that a certain nobleman of great possessions being about to journey, called together his servants, delivered to them his goods, and said unto each, "occupy till I come."

Of these servants it is observed, that by birth, they were the property of their master, but having fallen into captivity they had been bought also with a price, in addition to which, every one of them said "I love my master," and by

significant tokens had engaged to serve him during life. They would hold, they said, no separate property, or be influenced to serve by mercenary motives.—Their master's interest, they said should be their own, his reputation their honor, his prosperity their reward.

Thus circumstanced, it would be natural to expect of these servants, great "diligence in business," great friendship among themselves, and great joy as their master's interest should prosper in their hands ; and this for a season

ous, while others preferred going quite the other side. This difficulty was however settled by the amicable agreement, that both sides should be assailed at once, and the assault be continued until the servants should meet and shake hands in the middle.

In the ancient book already referred to, and which the nobleman deposited in the hands of the servants, there were rules which he directed them to follow in the management of the farm, forbidding them to make a single unauthorized experiment. In this book it was provided, that persons of competent skill in husbandry, who could exhibit evidences of friendship to their master, and would make the requisite engagements, might be received into the household of the nobleman; and for a season, those who offered themselves were carefully examined, and few were received, who did not consult in some good degree the interests of their master. But in process of time it came to pass, that from indolence or carelessness, or false tenderness, any person who offered himself was sure to be received, however deficient in skill, or wanting in the ordinary evidence of friendship to the nobleman.—The consequence was, that many servants unskilled in husbandry, and without friendship to the master, became members of his household. These, as might be expected, were extremely liberal in their views, and charitably disposed towards all those servants,

whose deportment in better days would have ensured their expulsion from the household. If any servants proposed a more strict examination concerning skill, or industry, or friendship to their master; with reference to the admission of servants, they were denounced as uncharitable, bigoted and cruel. Does not charity, it would be said, *hope all things, and believe all things?* Do we know the candidate for admission to be a novice? Why then should we torment him by unreasonable suspicions, implied in his examination? They could not doubt that he had devoted himself *some where* faithfully to the acquisition of agricultural knowledge, and that he was, or would be, as industrious, and skilful, and faithful as themselves; and, as to friendship to the nobleman, "Is it not well known." they demanded, "that he had no enemies? It was *unreasonable* to think that he had, and if any pretended to be his enemies, or even conducted as if they were, undoubtedly they were deceived, or from modesty merely exhibited themselves as being worse than they were. Besides, friendship and enmity are feelings of the heart, and what have we to do with each other's hearts? To our own master we stand or fall."

If, at any time, attempts were made to expel from the household an idle or profligate servant, he would inquire the authority of the servants to do it, and cry persecution; when instantly, as if

ful field might as well give place to the wilderness, as the wilderness to the fruitful field. He could perceive very little difference, he said, between the wild animals of the wilderness; and the tame animals of the fields. God who made them all, is benevolent, and no respecter of persons, from which it must result, that they are all happy, and about equally happy; he thought it therefore a useless expense to carry the arts of husbandry to the wilderness; he could perceive but little difference between the lion and the wolf, and the ox and the lamb. All were made very good animals, each lived in his own way and why should we disturb them.

Others who thought it would be a very good thing, to subdue the wilderness were *it possible*, faint-ed at the thought of such an undertaking. There were trees, they said, somewhere in that wilderness, an hundred miles in circumference, harder than the hardest steel, and whose roots were wrapped about the centre of the earth, so that to cut them down, or pull them up, or raise crops under their shade, was alike hopeless. And then there were lions in the way of unusual strength and fierceness, ready to slay every man who should show himself in their dominions; and there too travellers had seen the giants, in comparison with whom they were grasshoppers. If it was suggested by any servant, that the field now cultivated, was once itself a wil-

derness, and that what had been done could be done again; it was answered, that the great trees which stood here were pulled up by miracles, and that the giants and lions were all killed by supernatural aid, not to be expected

If any pointed to tracts of wilderness recently subdued without miracles, as difficult of subjugation as any that remained, a new host of objectors took up the argument; they admitted the *possibility* of subduing the wilderness, but denied that there was either time or resources. "It was as much as could be done," they said, "to maintain the cultivated field from the encroachments of the wilderness, and that charity begins at home. There were fences enough to be mended, and flocks to be gathered, and weeds to be eradicated at home, and nothing should be done abroad, until the farm at home was put in perfect order. Beside, where shall we find laborers for the whole field? And even were all the products of the cultivated part devoted to subduing the wilderness, it would be in vain;" forged acre poured into the treasury, thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold; and that the resources increased, as the work to be done diminished.

There was after all, another difficulty, which was, on which side of the wilderness they should begin; some preferring to assail the forests immediately contiguous

roused by fellow feeling, a host of sympathetic brethren would come to his aid to denounce his persecutors, and certify whom it might concern, of his pre-eminent industry, sincerity, and skill. In consequence of this state of things, the business of the farm, in many parts, was wretchedly conducted. Many a field was scarcely tilled at all, but was grown over to thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Some servants mingled tares with the good seed, and some sowed little besides tares.--

At first indeed, it was done in the night, while men slept, but at length it was done openly. If any alledged that a particular servant sowed tares, it was replied, that tares and wheat were so nearly alike, that none should presume authoritively to discriminate between them. 'It had always been disputed,' they said 'which were tares, and which were wheat, and that every servant must judge for himself.' The accused thought that he sowed wheat, and his accusers thought that he sowed tares, and he was as likely to be right as they. Besides, it was all, they said, a matter of mere opinion, for which no man should be accountable. If their fellow servant had in fact sowed tares, he had done it, they did not doubt, sincerely, and of course would be as well accepted to their master, as those who sowed wheat. But after all, said they, of what consequence is it what seed a man sows,

provided the harvest is good? What harm can there be in sowing tares, provided we reap wheat? or even if every seed produced after this kind, they could perceive no such mighty difference as to render it a matter of such consequence what seeds were sown. Among all the seeds sown upon the farm, they could not lay their finger upon more than two or three of much importance; and on the whole, they concluded, that tares sown sincerely, were even better than wheat sown hypocritically.

It was directed in the book of husbandry, that in the cultivation of fruit trees, particular attention should be paid to the root, but the same servants who thought that the tares sown sincerely, were better than wheat sown hypocritically, conceived the idea, that all attention to the roots of trees was entirely superfluous labour, that the root of the tree was dependent on the top, not the top upon the root; and that all a skillful husbandman had need to do, was to keep his trees well pruned. They talked, and wrote, and printed, and went about with great kindness, to open the eyes of other servants to the extreme folly of delving in the dirt about the roots of trees.—“For what,” said they, “can be more beautiful than leaves and blossoms, or what more excellent than delicious fruit? Let the top of the tree (they said) be duly cultivated, and the luxuriant top, if roots be needful, will produce them.” If any quoted that pas-

sage in the book of husbandry, which apostrophizing a tree says, "thou bearest not the root, but the root thee," it was easy to reply that the passage was mistranslated, and that it ought to be rendered as it does read in the original; thou bearest not the branches, but the branches thee.

Were it alledged, that where attention was paid to the roots of trees, they were invariably the most flourishing and fruitful; the fact would be sometimes reluctantly admitted, while that the difference was caused by the different mode of culture, would be strenuously denied. "Prove to us," they would say, "that the difference does not arise from soil or position, or the cultivation which you bestow upon the top, in common with us; for as long as it is possible, that the difference may arise from some other cause, it is absolutely certain that it is not produced by your particular mode of cultivation."

Another charge left upon record in the book of husbandry, was, that the servants should take particular care of the sheep and lambs of the flock, to see that they were defended against the lion, who went about seeking to devour them. But those servants who dreaded so much labor of tilling the roots of trees, found the service of keeping the flock too laborious for pleasure, and by searching critically the book of husbandry, discovered to their great joy that there was no such animal

as the lion; that the lion so often spoken of in the book of husbandry, as such a powerful and ferocious animal was nothing but the principle of evil personified, as it existed in the thunder storms and the diseases of sheep. It is well known, they said, that thunder storms roar, that they are noxious to lambs, and that they go about, figuratively seeking whom they may figuratively devour. When reminded that the book spoke of many lions, though of one as chief in strength and ferocity, it was easily to reply, that thunder storms were numerous, some great and some small; the greatest being called the old lion, and the rest lions, or young lions, according to their power. In like manner, they insisted, were the diseases of sheep personified, proceeding, as they all did, from principles of disease in the animal called the old lion, or the lion, or young lion, as the disease was more or less destructive.—

These diseases, it was well known, caused sheep to bleat, which by a figure of speech, common in eastern countries, might be called *roaring*, and as disease and death decompose the bodies of animals, they are fitly compared to a lion tearing in pieces and devouring his prey. It is scarcely to be conceived how much rejoicing and self-complacency this discovery occasioned. The servants who made it and availed themselves of it, deemed themselves the most learned servants on the farm, and

to express at once their estimation of themselves, and their contempt of the old fashioned servants, they styled themselves *rational husbandmen*. The irrational servants did in this case all to reclaim their fellow servants, which could be expected of men bereft of reason, or who had never had any. They demanded, how the principle of evil in diseases and thunder-storms, which was a reality, could possibly be illustrated by clothing it with the animated powers, and actions of an animal which did not exist. What sense could there be in calling a traitor a *Judas*, had no treacherous Judas existed; in calling a miser's heart, a heart of stone, if no such hard material, called a stone, had any being; and why call the principle of evil in disease and thunder, a lion, if there be no such living animal in the wilderness. Does not the calling of storms and diseases, lions, (said these simple-hearted servants,) prove the existence of real lions? Do the Greeks and eastern nations illustrate the power of thunder and disease by the properties and actions of non-existences? Do you find any examples of the kind in Homer, Sanchoniathon, Manetho, or the Talmuds? These questions, demanding time, in order to answer them learnedly, time was accordingly taken, when, after extended research, without being able to find an example in point, it was profoundly conjectured, that

all the books, which authorised the illustration of the properties of real existences, by the properties and actions of nothing, were destroyed in Herculaneum, or burnt in the Alexandrian library.

BUNYAN.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN GUILT.

Would men compare themselves with God's law, instead of comparing themselves with their neighbours, they would make a very different estimate of their religious character from what they frequently do. There is a wide distinction we grant, between the man who has only indulged hated or impure desire in his *heart*, and the murderer or the adulterer; yet is the crime of the same *nature*—equally a breach of the Divine law, indicating a bad moral state of the soul, and showing an awful contrariety to the benevolence and purity of the divine nature. But where lives the man who hath not thus offended, and who hath not, therefore, in himself, a proof of his depravity, and an evidence of guilt, which should forcibly dictate to his lips the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Chr. Observer.

Omicron is received and will appear in a future number.

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